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Notes on the Central Committee of the Austrian Communist Party

1. Great changes in the personnel and policy of the Central Committee of the Austrian Communist Party (CP) are expected [redacted] Erwin Zucker-Schilling, who has long enjoyed the particular backing of the Soviets and of the Central Committee, is expected to become political adviser to the Central Committee and to play a much greater part in CP affairs. The erstwhile Communist intellectual leaders, Ernst Fischer, Dr. Viktor Matejka, Nikolaus Novotny, Dr. Lang (former general manager of Globus), and Mayer-Maly will be replaced by Dr. Otto Langbein, Dr. Ludwig Soswinski (economic expert for the Central Committee), and Generaldirektor Schmidt of Globus Verlag. Dr. Karl Altrann, former Minister of Electrification, [redacted] is expected to request an official position as Magistrats-Direktorstellvertreter in the Vienna municipal government.

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Comment: Another item, [redacted]

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[redacted] indicates that the Central Committee has attempted to force Matejka's resignation as Stadtrat in favor of Dr. Otto Langbein; Matejka staved off the resignation by obtaining the intervention of Josef Lauscher in the Vienna CP Secretariat, but will have to give up the post [redacted]

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2. Friedl Fuernberg was in Budapest [redacted] and was seen in Szeged on [redacted] He had a conference with Rakosi [redacted] Honner visited Bucharest, where he is said to have submitted strategic plans to the Cominform for establishing a "people's democracy" in Austria. Ernst Fischer returned to Vienna [redacted] from the Intellectual Congress in Wroclaw.

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This document is hereby regraded to CONFIDENTIAL in accordance with the letter of 16 October 1978 from the Director of Central Intelligence to the Archivist of the United States.

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3. Alfred Ruzicka, a [redacted] veteran Communist, was recently appointed a member of the Central Committee as a deputy to Otto Martin Horneck.

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[redacted] He returned to Austria only recently, was assigned by the Soviets the task of observing all that went on in CP headquarters, and was finally designated by the Soviets to be a member of the Central Committee and the real power within it. It is Ruzicka who will supervise a reorganization of the CP, which has recently been forecast by Koplenig.

4. Within the past five months, the Central Committee has increased its membership from 35 to 40, and, still more recently, to 42, in connection with a reorganization of the Central Committee. Among the 42 are seven representatives of the Federal Provinces; the General Secretary; the treasurer; the three members of Parliament; the secretary of the Vienna Section; economic experts; representatives from such groups as the Gewerkschaftsbund, government employees, private employees, workers, intellectuals, publicity and press, and the Werkschutz. The Central Committee also includes about twelve special advisors who are nominated by the Soviet authorities. The real Central Committee, however, is composed of only seven men who decide party policy. The other 35, although nominally members, cannot participate in all meetings of the Central Committee, nor do they have full voting power.

5. Friedl Fuernberg, General Secretary of the Austrian Communist Party, is reported to have fallen from Soviet favor. Followers of the Soviet line within the Central Committee are said to have lodged complaints against him for deviations towards a nationalist policy and also for his recently intensified friendship with Ernst Fischer. While Fuernberg continues to hold his job, his resignation has been suggested by the Soviets, who have already put a new man in real control of the Central Committee instead of Fuernberg.

Comment: This new man may be Ruzicka, mentioned in paragraph 3 above.

Soviet Complaint to Central Committee regarding  
Gottlieb Fiala

The Soviet supervisory office ("Überwachungsstelle"), an "office of the Soviet Intelligence Service", complained recently to the Central Committee concerning a recent policy adopted by Gottlieb Fiala, vice president of the Trade Union Association (Oesterreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund), who was hitherto trusted by both the Central Committee and the Soviets. Fiala has been urging reductions in working hours for all workers and employees. This does not conform to the Soviet policy of increasing production within the USIA plants. The Soviets therefore call this policy "demagogic".

Issuance of Special Soviet Travel Permits

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[redacted]  
between 60 and 70 persons each month obtain from the Soviets special travel permits to enter or leave Austria. These special passes are distributed to

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Communists carrying out special missions, couriers, and the like. Until recently, such passes were issued by the Soviet headquarters in Vienna, but at present a particular office of the MVD in Vienna I, address Schulerstrasse, handled all such matters.

Activities of Communist Journalists

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8. Schnitke, chief editor of the Soviet-sponsored newspaper, Oesterreichische Zeitung, who also used the names Schnittkow and Schnittkin, left for Moscow

to explain the poor financial situation of his newspaper

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9. Leonidas Martinides, journalist and economic expert, is the publisher of an economic weekly paper, Oesterreichische Wirtschaft.

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Society for the Cultivation of Cultural and Economic Relations with the Soviet Union

10. The Soviets are greatly disappointed with the work of the Society for the Cultivation of Cultural and Economic Relations with the Soviet Union, which has become more and more a Communist organization, alienating non-Communist liberals who might otherwise be successfully wooed in the interest of friendly relations with the USSR. Financial support for the organization has been cut, and even its gasoline supply has been reduced. As a result, the society reduced its office staff. Rudolf Kende, Organisationsreferent for more than three years, and Erich Foerster, head of the youth and sport section, have both been dismissed. Dr. Nikolaus Novorka, vice president of the Society, is now attempting to reorganize the Society to restore its appeal to non-Communists. For this purpose, Novorka has started a speech training class which meets every Monday under the direction of the Soviet national, Goldenberg, a censor at Ravag. Comment: Soviet Major Goldenberg has been [redacted] the Soviet Control Officer at Ravag.) A discussion group called "Gorki-Runde",

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which meets with Soviet functionaries and invites participation from organizations not affiliated with the society, represents another attempt to win non-Communist support. The Gorki-Runde met for the first time [redacted]

[redacted] at the Gorki-Ecke on the Schubertring, Vienna I. Dr. Walther Fischer, a 50X1-HUM new member of the society [redacted]

[redacted] endorses the viewpoint of the Cominform as opposed 50X1-HUM to the nationalistic views [redacted]. It is considered possible that Walther Fischer will take over the position within the society hitherto held by Ruth Fischer.

Estimate of Werkschutz Strength

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[redacted]  
the Communists have about 28,000 armed militiamen in USIA firms in Vienna and Lower Austria. [redacted]

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( Comment:

Dr. Egon Schlesinger, [redacted] had been assigned to clerical functions in the Staatapolizei. If [redacted] above is referring to the Werkschutz alone, the figure of 28,000 is highly exaggerated.)

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